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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet highlights 13 public, academic, school, and special programs that are representative of 62 libraries and media centers recognized by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) for their innovative programs. Programs are grouped in the following categories: (1) community service programs (the Answer Place, Milwaukee Public Library, Wisconsin, and the Consumer Health Information Resource Service, University of Nebraska Library of Medicine); (2) programs to teach students to use library resources (Oak Grove Elementary School Resource Center, Bloomington, Minnesota, and the library skills program at Abramson High School, New Orleans, Louisiana); (3) services for special populations such as those in institutions, the disadvantaged, and the handicapped (California Youth Authority's Libraries Are Survival/Employment Resource Centers, the Reading Incentive Program, Lakeland, Florida, and the Library Service for the Hearing Impaired, operating out of the Nashville Public Library, Tennessee; (4) arts education programs for children developed with area schools (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Shawnee Mission, Kansas, libraries); (5) programs in which libraries share information and consolidate services (Unified Media Center, Richmond, Virginia, and "Sharing Our Resources" program in rural Vermont); and (6) programs which use technology to inaugurate new library services (White Hall High School, Montana, and the Model Media Center Utilizing Microcomputers at the Mining and Mechanical Institute Preparatory School, Freeland, Pennsylvania). (MES)

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Check This Out

Highlights of Model Library Programs

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U.S. Department of Education
William J. Bennett
Secretary

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Chester E. Finn, Jr.
Assistant Secretary

Library Programs
Anne J. Mathews
Director

Information Services
Ray Fields
Director

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Introduction

Libraries are not what they used to be.

No longer are libraries simply hushed depositories for books and papers. The modern library or media center is a high-technology resource with sophisticated equipment that would arouse the envy of any computer junkie. Today's librarians, often called media specialists or information managers, use computers and other high technology equipment. They produce audiotapes, videotapes, slides, and films to explain how to use the library, and they provide these materials for classroom instruction as well. Computer hookups link libraries to their local and national counterparts, thus providing easy access to myriad resources.

Even the look of America's libraries has changed.

Online catalogs are replacing the trusty card catalog. Individual carrels are edging out long worktables, and paperbacks are frequently supplanting the bulky hardbacks of yesteryear. Bar-code readers have revolutionized checkout procedures. And services like bookmobiles and storefront libraries continue to attract new users.

Community libraries frequently offer courses in subjects like first aid, child care, and personal financial management. In addition, some offer courses on computer software, and others give classes on reading, math, and many other subjects taught in school.

Add these innovations to the basic ingredient of libraries throughout time—a well-selected aggregate of books—and what is available at today's library is a treasure trove of services limited only by the user's imagination.

Today libraries are so numerous that almost every American has access to one. The United States boasts libraries everywhere—from the inner cities to the most affluent suburbs; from the populous coasts to the remotest mountain communities. The U.S. Department of Education wants to increase Americans' appreciation and use of what modern libraries offer. To identify outstanding programs so that other media centers can emulate them, the Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) recently recognized 62 libraries and media centers for their innovative programs and described them in *Check This Out: Library Program Models*, a book published in 1987 by the Department. This companion pamphlet highlights some of these programs.

In 1985, OERI's Library Programs office asked the Chief Officers of State Libraries, Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Coordinators, Chief State School Officers, and members of the American Library Association to nominate excellent programs for recognition awards. School, public, college, university, and specialized libraries were all eligible.

Each nominated program provided a panel of 16 reviewers with documentation of its goals and procedures, along with a report on its effectiveness. Some also submitted proposals, reports, budgets, and publicity materials, as well as slides, photographs, and videotapes illustrating how they operate. Reviewers—all library or education professionals—then interviewed the program directors before selecting the 62 programs featured in *Check This Out*.

The 14 exemplary programs featured here are representative of the 62. Some have gained recognition for their creative community services. Others stand out because they have inaugurated particularly successful programs to teach students how to use library resources for independent research. A third group provides services to special populations, such as those in institutions, the disadvantaged, and the handicapped. Some have worked with area schools to develop innovative arts education programs for children. Still another group demonstrates the many advantages of libraries sharing information and consolidating their services. And a final group has adapted technology to better serve constituents.

Despite the different needs these library programs address, they have two important common denominators. They are all innovative in their use of resources and they are all replicable. The latter was an important criterion in their selection, since it is feasible for other libraries and communities who want to provide similar services to duplicate or adapt these award-winning programs to meet their own needs. The longer version of *Check This Out* contains more details, including essential program elements, funding sources, dissemination services, and contacts for further information.

Community Service Programs

Some library programs stand out because they provide unusual services to the entire community—or to specific groups in it.

The Answer Place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, offers information and referral (I&R) services to city residents on everything from career issues to neighborhood events. The Consumer Health Information Center at the University of Nebraska Library of Medicine will answer questions about health issues for all Nebraskans.

The Answer Place

The Answer Place (TAP) reflects the philosophy of Lynne Bellehumeur, the head of Extension Services in the Milwaukee Public Library system, who believes that "libraries should take on the role of a community information center." If Milwaukeeans need information about swimming lessons at public pools, or a CPR class, or even want to find a Spanish tutor, all they have to do is call TAP. And they can be confident that the information they receive is inclusive, because TAP draws from a variety of sources. Not only do the 12 libraries in the city system share their resources, but so do a number of private and government agencies, including the United Way, Information Service for the Aging, Community Relations/Social Development Commission, Family Services, the County Mental Health Association, and others.

TAP began in 1979, with library staff members interviewing over 2,000 agencies and organizations in the metropolitan area and recording facts on 3- by 5-inch cards. The focus was on career, consumer, ethnic, education, recreation, and local neighborhood information. There was less concentration on areas covered by other I&R services, such as health care and emergency food and shelter. Each library gathered community information for its own area and shared it with all system libraries on telephone request.

The system grew quickly and soon it was no longer feasible to rely on 3- by 5-inch cards and telephones for updating and sharing information. So, in 1985, the library put the TAP files onto a computer database. The result was a computerized file that could be readily updated and accessed by the 12 libraries.

In 1985, TAP took another important step towards developing the comprehensive service they provide today. Instead of attempting to avoid duplication of the other I&R agencies, the library sought to achieve maximum use of resources through sharing. It began planning a cooperative project that resulted in a standard data collection instrument for all I&R agencies to use in

gathering information. It also initiated joint training for the data collectors, a common thesaurus of descriptors, allocation of responsibility for data collection among agencies, and networking that allows online inquiry and updating of files by all members. The library maintains the primary data base in its computers, which can be accessed by terminals in the participating agencies, and it supplies printouts on request. All of the services now use each other's information to serve the community more efficiently.

Health Information

The University of Nebraska's McGoogan Library of Medicine was designed to serve the information needs of health professionals. When it instituted the Consumer Health Information Resource Service (CHIRS), the library added a new mission: to make health information easily available to every Nebraskan. Now anyone in the State who needs information about a health concern has access to the resources and expertise of the University's medical library.

Marie Reidelbach, the project director for CHIRS, explained that many consumers were frustrated because they couldn't get information on health issues, so CHIRS was created so that "anybody in the State could go to their public library for health information." Librarians throughout the State attend workshops sponsored by the McGoogan Library on providing health information to their patrons.

Consumer questions usually fall into two main categories. One is requests for general information on topics such as exercise, diet, physical fitness, child care, and drug abuse. For such inquiries, local libraries provide many resources, with collections based on core lists of materials developed by McGoogan Library staff. The second type of request is for specific information on a condition, diagnosis, treatment, or outcome and is generally sought to supplement information already given by a doctor. In cases where the question's scope exceeds the local libraries' resources, inquiries are referred to medical reference librarians at the McGoogan Library. Through an interlibrary loan program, consumers can obtain additional health materials from the McGoogan Library at their local public library.

Teaching Kids to Do Research

Library media specialists across the country are actively involved with teachers in imparting thinking and research skills and providing both basic and supplementary materials for students and teachers. At the Oak Grove Elementary School Resource Center in Bloomington, Minnesota, very young children acquire rudimentary research skills. Abramson High in New Orleans gives fuller training in research to secondary students.

Developing Self-Reliance

Each year, the library media specialist at the Oak Grove Elementary School Resource Center teaches basic research techniques to about 500 elementary school students and helps them carry out independent research projects. In the library media center, students learn to use the library's resources either by completing classroom assignments or by working on projects from an information skills curriculum that is designed specifically to teach youngsters how to do research. They progress from simple tasks, such as locating information, to more complex ones involving evaluation and use of data. The emphasis is on developing students' self-reliance in using library resources. Children are also encouraged to use multimedia resources. Books, audiotapes, videotapes, computers, and other hardware, as well as printed materials, are easily accessible. Using combinations of these resources in their research projects, students may produce a written or taped report or a display. So the role of the resource center library media specialist is primarily one of a facilitator who observes learning behaviors and offers help to students when needed.

This program is a far cry from the cursory introduction to libraries that so many elementary school youngsters receive. It not only prepares them for research assignments that will be a part of their future schooling, but followup interviews show that these students retain the knowledge acquired through such independent research for a much longer period of time than they retain what is learned in a regular classroom setting.

Students at Abramson High School in New Orleans receive extensive training in library skills. Each year, media specialist Hazel Moore runs a contest between freshmen and seniors to determine how much they know about libraries. The competition has a dual purpose: to identify subjects in which incoming students need help and to gauge the progress of outgoing seniors. This is all part of Ms. Moore's philosophy that learning how to use the library "is an integral part of the subject matter."

Abramson High's program began in 1983, when librarians realized that most of the school's 2,400 students didn't have adequate research skills and there was no coordinated program to teach them. When the media specialists tested incoming freshmen to identify areas in which they needed instruction, the librarians discovered that students had a general knowledge of the Dewey decimal system and the card catalog. Most, however, lacked skills for more specialized research and were unfamiliar with such tools as the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, atlases, handbooks, yearbooks, biographical dictionaries, and indexes.

To remedy the situation, the media center personnel developed a comprehensive library skills program to span a student's 4 years at Abramson. The program emphasizes research techniques for discovering all relevant sources of information on a given topic and organizing it within an outline.

Freshmen begin with an orientation to the media center's resources and services. The next phase is to integrate the teaching of research skills with classroom work. Library staff coordinate with English, social studies, and science teachers, so that students learn those skills needed for upcoming assignments. By graduation, they have had opportunities to do some fairly sophisticated research using primary source material that includes 19th century issues of *The New York Times* and 18th century diaries and reports covering the American revolutionary era.

Working with teachers, librarians at Abramson teach skills that students can use not only to pursue further studies but to research their own questions as consumers and citizens.

Services for Special Populations

Library media centers serve entire communities, but some have programs designed specifically to help those with special needs. For example, libraries at the California Youth Authority facilities train young convicts to use libraries to help in job searches and prepare for their release. The Reading Incentive Program in Lakeland, Florida, rewards disadvantaged youngsters for reading at home. And the Nashville Public Library specializes in serving the hearing impaired throughout Tennessee.

Survival Techniques

The California Youth Authority (CYA) has developed a program called Libraries Are Survival/Employment Resource Centers to help juvenile offenders prepare for rejoining society after they have served their time in one of the State's CYA facilities. The major emphasis is on helping these young people learn library skills useful in job seeking.

The youths in CYA facilities face many barriers to finding employment and dealing successfully with life's demands outside of the institution. For example, while their average age is 18.7 years, the average reading level is at the seventh grade. In addition, many are members of minority groups and have limited English-speaking ability.

The CYA has libraries and educational programs in all eight of its facilities, and for many of the wards, this is their first meaningful exposure to libraries and what they have to offer. A CYA library is a combination public, school, and law library for those it serves, and many have borrowed books for the first time, improved their reading skills, and learned to find information and recreational reading. A primary objective, however, is to teach skills that these young people can use at libraries back in their home communities.

The programs offer several pamphlets developed to help the offender survey the labor market, research job opportunities in California, and make career decisions. After introducing these materials to the inmates, library personnel then demonstrate three steps to finding a job. The first step teaches the wards to use computers to generate stationery, resumés, and mock job applications. They then put a number of personal characteristics into a data bank that will help them identify jobs for which they are qualified. Finally, they can access a data bank that offers profiles of job opportunities in different California communities.

This is one example of a program for a special population that could readily be adapted to other groups or to the population as a whole. It also shows that there are local governments using library resources to meet a pressing social need.

Reading Incentives

The Reading Incentive Program at North Lakeland Elementary School encourages students in Lakeland, Florida, by rewarding them for reading at home. The school serves students from kindergarten through third grade, many of whom come from families of low socioeconomic status. When the media center informally surveyed parents, it found that as many as 50 percent were illiterate and that many homes lacked books and magazines.

To encourage reading, the school decided to do everything in its power to expose students to books. The media center created the Reading Incentive Program, based on enlisting parental participation and a reward system for reading. Each year, the school picks a theme for the program: One year it was "Reading Olympics," with medals as incentive awards. Teachers expect each child to complete a book a week and obtain a signed statement from a parent or guardian indicating that the child had read it. Teachers collect the signed statements, and, when the child reaches a preset goal, he or she receives an award from the media center. Under the "Reading Olympics" theme, students were able to win gold, silver, and bronze medals, as well as qualify for free books.

Children who achieve their goal are also honored in other ways. Their names are announced over the loudspeaker, their classmates applaud their achievement, and they receive recognition in an awards assembly at the end of the year. The program has been enormously successful, with more than 80 percent of the students reading a book a week for the entire school year.

In establishing the program, North Lakeland's media specialists made certain the goals were realistic so that each student had a chance to succeed. They were careful to select timely themes and to set appropriate goals and reading levels for each grade. The staff also prepared a booklet for parents and students explaining the program, giving directions, and setting goals, and they kept records for the media center and classrooms. In addition, a schoolwide kickoff introduced the program to students so everyone could start simultaneously. Indeed, Lakeland's Reading Incentive Program shows how a school library can help improve literacy in its community and introduce children to the world of books.

In 1978, Nashville Public Library officials set out to offer the hearing impaired new opportunities by initiating a library program designed to meet

their needs. This endeavor proved so successful that in 1983, they expanded their program to serve hearing-impaired individuals statewide. Hearing impairment, the most common, chronic physical disability in the United States, affects the sufferer's literacy: an adult with a hearing impairment since birth or an early age usually reads at only the fourth- to sixth-grade level.

The Library Service for the Hearing Impaired (LSHI), operating out of Nashville, works with libraries throughout the State. It conducts training sessions for library personnel on how to use Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf (TDDs) and interpreter services, as well as how to work with the hearing impaired. The Nashville Public Library's interlibrary loan system makes accessible statewide their collection of books, films, videotapes, and resource materials. This collection on hearing impairment is the most extensive in the Southeast. Also, LSHI produces and disseminates throughout the State public awareness literature, as well as radio and television public service announcements.

One of LSHI's top priorities is to help deaf people with what is often a difficult task—getting up-to-date information on current events. This is done through the TDD Newscenter, which provides news, weather, information on community events and consumer issues, and other programs of interest. The Newscenter serves the Nashville area, but also reaches many other areas throughout the State. In addition, the Newscenter offers a statewide tollfree information center with news of workshops, meetings, conventions, and legislation affecting the hearing impaired. All of the Newscenter's programs are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

There is another statewide tollfree line operating Monday through Friday. Hearing-impaired people may call the service via TDD and ask a reference question on any topic or request a book, film, or other resource through their library. This telephone service is also for the use of hearing patrons who desire information on hearing impairment or services available in their communities.

Telephone TDDs and Television Telecaption Decoders are available free on loan to hearing-impaired individuals from many public libraries throughout Tennessee and from the LSHI office.

In their many efforts to meet the information needs of the hearing impaired and better inform the public, LSHI works cooperatively with more than 20 other agencies whose missions also include serving the hearing impaired. LSHI exemplifies how libraries can join forces with outside organizations to meet the needs of a special population effectively.

Children and the Arts

Working together with local schools, public libraries are bringing a new zest to teaching children to appreciate the arts and express themselves creatively. Two particularly colorful and interesting programs are sponsored by the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the Shawnee Mission, Kansas, libraries.

Poetry Concerts

The "poetry concerts" sponsored by Milwaukee's public libraries culminate a year of preparation by area school children. Local public schools and the library system work together each year to present concerts, which are part poetry reading, part visual arts showcase, and part music and dance performance. Jane Botham, the coordinator of children's services in the Milwaukee Public Library system, says the concerts promote local poets and simultaneously encourage students to learn about poetry.

Students attend workshops at the public libraries where they may write and share their own poetry with the help of a poet-in-residence. One nationally known writer who sponsored a recent concert said of her role in working with the children: "Instead of building a fence of formality around poetry, I want to emphasize its accessibility, the sound, rhythm, humor, the inherent simplicity. Poetry can be as natural and effective a form of self-expression as singing or shouting."

At other library workshops, the children may work with an artist-in-residence on interpreting poems through dance and music. At another workshop, children react to presentations of American folklore, music, and poetry through visual arts projects.

At the end of the year, the library system sponsors a poetry concert where artists and children display the results of their collaboration. Each concert becomes a family event featuring a nationally known poet, local theatrical groups, and children's poetry acted out by the children. "Mime and music, drama and dance, and a vibrant display of art are all a part of the poetry concert," says Ms. Botham. If, as Simonides tells us, painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks, then Milwaukee's poetry concerts are the National Symphony and the Louvre rolled into one. Well, almost.

Readers Meet Authors

In Shawnee Mission, Kansas, writers of children's books participate in a similar program called the Children's and Young Adult Author Program. School district library personnel invite authors of children's books to give lec-

tures and workshops on their work. They make all necessary travel arrangements and pay an honorarium to visiting authors.

Through a network of national writers' and educators' conventions, several authors are selected to present programs to children at grade levels appropriate to their work. Don Shirley, the director of Library Services in Shawnee Mission, said, "We try to identify [authors] who are used to going out and talking to kids." Usually each author conducts two workshops at four of the Shawnee Mission schools, beginning with a lecture and ending with group discussion. Occasionally, students at the secondary school level will be treated to an all-day writer's workshop.

Before the authors come, the school librarian and classroom teacher work together to prepare the children. Students read at least one book by one of the visiting authors, learn something about the writer's background, and participate in group discussions. They also may do art and musical projects relating to the book's theme and they brainstorm about questions to ask the writer. By the time the authors arrive, usually for 1-week visits, the children are fully prepared. Shirley calls the program "a great motivator of children to read, write, and speak publicly."

Consolidated Services

To operate more efficiently, save money, and serve the community more effectively, many library districts have consolidated services into a central office. Two exemplary central library offices recognized in *Check This Out: Library Program Models* are the Unified Media Center for public schools in Richmond, Virginia, and the "Sharing Our Resources" program operating in rural Vermont. Both achieved significant improvements in services through central planning and circulation of the system's resources.

In Richmond, Virginia, the school district consolidated many responsibilities of the school libraries into one unit—a central Media Services Department. Their approach frees up librarians to spend more time working with students and teachers. The district has also developed a program for teaching library media skills to students, kindergarten through high school. Also, it fosters innovative uses of new technologies.

The central office staff of 19 works closely with librarians in the schools. In fact, its primary responsibility is to relieve school media specialists of many clerical responsibilities. The staff oversees audiovisual equipment, the film and video library, graphics, photography, microfilming, and instructional and in-house television. Also, it maintains a Curriculum Materials Center which houses such resources as books, periodicals, and films available to faculty members throughout the system. The librarians in the schools, with input from other faculty, draw up lists of new materials to be ordered. However, it is the central Media Services Department that places the orders and ensures that each school has access to the equipment and services of the entire system.

Library/Media Services Administrator Beverly J. Bagan credits her staff for many of the program's achievements. She emphasizes, however, that the secret of the program's success is the school librarian, who is certified as both a teacher and a library media specialist.

New technologies in the libraries include an Apple computer and printer. Students use the equipment for learning, and library personnel use it to perform routine administrative tasks. Also, the libraries are the key point for instructional television programs which can be broadcast to classrooms or taped. Richmond's Media Services Department houses TV studio facilities where public school personnel and students produce programs for closed-circuit TV.

Offering a wealth of materials to students and teachers, the libraries have become "the hub of each school," according to Mrs. Bagan. The Media Services Department goes to great lengths to encourage maximum use of all resources. Certainly, the multifaceted achievements of the Richmond libraries demonstrate the many benefits of a centralized system. For these achievements, the Richmond Unified Library Media Program won the prestigious Encyclopedia Britannica/American Association of School Librarians Award for 1985.

The kind of central coordination that has helped Richmond school libraries to excel has been particularly effective in rural areas. According to Bruce Richardson, superintendent of Vermont's Orleans Southwest District, the "Sharing Our Resources Program" exemplifies how "working together can enhance the library service to the whole community in a very remote rural area."

"In our area," Richardson explains, "each town had a little library and only the high schools were served. Consequently, we had a number of very small libraries competing for limited resources within the district, from the State, and even on the Federal level." To address this problem, in the fall of 1980, Richardson convened a meeting of representatives from the public schools, public libraries, and a local college. Participants established the following goals for building a more useful library system:

- Increase knowledge of each library's collection;
- Maintain a cooperative catalog and circulation system;
- Limit duplication of materials and coordinate purchases;
- Improve communication between public and school libraries;
- Make better use of existing facilities and share equipment; and
- Sponsor library programs for patrons of all ages.

The representatives formed a Library Council that meets regularly to discuss further improvements. The Council began with three projects: creating a standard card catalog; making a standardized list of all periodicals available in each library; and cataloging the system's audiovisual equipment. Each list is being transferred to a database, which will soon be available to each library.

According to Richardson, the system that resulted has been "instrumental in helping us establish elementary school libraries and establishing a working relationship between public and school libraries."

Technology to Improve Services

Other programs in *Check This Out* have used technology to inaugurate new library services. In White Hall, Montana, a resourceful media specialist used the school library's audiovisual equipment to solve a biology teacher's problem. And a school library in Freeland, Pennsylvania, demonstrated how microcomputers can save much time in performing a wide range of routine library administrative tasks.

When a shortage of microscopes at Whitehall High School in western Montana made it hard for science teachers to teach students about micro-organisms, they drafted Al Anderson, the library media specialist, to solve the problem. Working closely with biology teacher Todd Breitenfeld, he developed a system to project microscopic images on a television screen by using the science department's microscopes and the media center's video taping equipment. It took 2 years of trial and error to devise a small, affordable adapter. Then "Videotaping through Microscopes" became a part of the school program.

"[Now] I can be sure that each student has seen what he should have seen after the lab is finished," said Breitenfeldt. Another benefit is that training students to use the microscopes is done on video. This means that when students do have access to microscopes, they spend less time struggling with the equipment and more time seeing and learning about micro-organisms.

Through these programs, and many others like them, students all over the country are not only using their libraries more but also are being stimulated to learn more. Since this innovative program began at Whitehall High, more students—particularly more girls—have enrolled in science classes, and test results of college-bound young people show higher scores in science than in any other subject.

The Model Media Center Utilizing Microcomputers at the Mining and Mechanical Institute (MMI) Preparatory School in Freeland, Pennsylvania, demonstrates how a small school library can get the most out of microcomputers. The program began when MMI Librarian Nancy Everhart, who serves 20 faculty members and about 200 students in grades 7 to 12, realized that most of her colleagues were not fully using the school's microcomputers. "We'd had the computers available for 2 years," she said, but "unfortunately, the computers were thrown into [the library] with no training provided for librarians or students."

To address this problem, MMI applied for and obtained a grant to determine how the school library could make maximum use of microcomputers and to develop a book documenting their model for others. The librarian began by following the three steps Eric Anderson advocates in *The Primer of Library Microcomputing*: "Identify a local task that is killing you in the manual world; identify a piece of micro software that has the potential to solve it; and identify the hardware that the software runs on." Using these guidelines, she developed a system of software and hardware that the library could use.The outcome was dramatic in terms of time saved by computerizing such routine tasks as checking books in and out, searching for periodical articles, producing catalog cards for books, and preparing letters and monthly circulation reports.

The Model Media Center then branched out to help teachers use computers to support their work. The library offered training sessions and even circulated the software and hardware. "Why not? It's part of the collection, isn't it?" said Ms. Everhart. As a result, teachers are using the computers for word processing, classroom demonstrations, grade keeping, and test construction.

In addition, students are making direct use of the computers as a result of library programs that teach necessary skills. By conducting computerized searches of other libraries' materials and participating in interlibrary loan arrangements, they now have vastly expanded resources available to them.

To computerize a broad range of library tasks requires a substantial investment of time and money. But MMI's experience with the Model Media Center demonstrates how even a small school library can make the transition and reap a big, long-term payoff in terms of time and money saved.

Conclusion

As this brief survey shows, libraries offer innovative and comprehensive services to communities throughout the country. The range of needs addressed in the library programs highlighted here is broad. They do everything from helping a worried individual research a medical problem to teaching kids how to express themselves through poetry. These are just a few of many such programs described in more depth in *Check This Out: Library Program Models* (see ordering information below).

Despite the great diversity, all of the programs selected for this brochure and the longer version of *Check This Out* have some things in common. First, they are all innovative in their use of library resources to meet a need. Also, they are replicable. If you are interested in instituting or adapting any of the programs highlighted here, please be sure to see *Check This Out: Library Program Models* for more details, including information on funding sources, staffing, and contacts for further information.

For the past 30 years, the U.S. Government has taken part in the enormous growth and diversification of the nation's libraries. By identifying exemplary programs and encouraging others to strive for excellence, the aim is to make the world's greatest library system even better.

This booklet is a joint effort of Office of Educational Research and Improvement Library Programs and Information Services units. It was written by Tony Fowler and Kathryn Perkinson of Information Services. Guidance was provided by Anne Mathews, Director, Library Programs, and Yvonne Carter, Administrative Librarian.

Ordering Information

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